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Letter dated 30 October 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the forty-ninth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted in pursuance of paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 September to 22 October 2017.

The Technical Secretariat of OPCW has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. Two stationary above-ground facilities are still to be destroyed and I take note of the information provided by the Director-General that the Syrian Arab Republic has requested assistance in this regard. I hope that these two facilities will be destroyed as soon as possible and that the OPCW Technical Secretariat will be in a position to confirm their destruction.

I regret to note that the high-level consultations between OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic, held from 16 to 18 September 2017, did not resolve all the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. I note that, as stated by the Director-General, OPCW was not able to verify the explanations provided by the Syrian Arab Republic because the organisation did not have the necessary original records and was not able to consult leaders/officials who have an overarching knowledge of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

As long as the international community cannot be certain that the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic is complete and accurate, the activities aimed at ensuring the full implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) must continue. I again urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with OPCW in this respect.

As regards the work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, I note that, at a briefing to OPCW member States on 3 October, the Director-General confirmed that the results of the analyses of samples relating to the alleged use of chemical weapons at Latamné showed the presence of sarin and sarin-related substances. I also note the intention of the Fact-Finding Mission to continue its work on those allegations, as well as on other incidents drawn to its attention. The multiple allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, in defiance of international law, are gradually lifting the taboo against such weapons that previously existed. Nothing can justify their use in any situation by any users.

Please recycle

During the reporting period, the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations was finalizing its seventh report to the Security Council, in which it sets out the main findings of the detailed investigations that it has conducted on the use of chemical weapons in Oum Haouch and Khan Cheikhoun. Its findings were presented to the Security Council on 26 October. I am sure that the Joint Investigative Mechanism will perform its mandate independently, impartially and objectively.

I emphasize that the Security Council has previously stated that the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security and a serious violation of international law. I urge the Council to display the necessary unity to ensure that those who use chemical weapons are held accountable for their actions, in order to discourage and put an end to these inhuman acts, for which there can be no impunity.

I thank all the Member States for their cooperation and for the support which they are giving to the Mechanism in its work.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and the Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 September to 22 October 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the forty-ninth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 September 2017 to 22 October 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. From 23 September to 6 October 2017, the Secretariat carried out annual inspections of five underground structures already verified as destroyed.

(b) During the period under review, the Secretariat has also continued the preparatory work to carry out an initial inspection to confirm the current condition of the last two stationary above-ground facilities. As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Council at its Eighty-Sixth Session (EC-86/DG.32, dated 10 October 2017), the Syrian Arab Republic has requested assistance to undertake the destruction of the facilities located at these two sites. An information Note on this matter has been circulated (S/1541/2017, dated 9 October 2017).

(c) On 20 October 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-seventh monthly report (EC-87/P/NAT.1, dated 20 October 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. As reported by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Council at its Eighty-Sixth Session (EC-86/DG.32), another round of high-level consultations with a delegation led by the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, was held at the OPCW Headquarters from 16 to 18 September 2017. The purpose of these consultations was to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, specifically:

(a) the role of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in the Syrian chemical weapons programme;

(b) the results of analyses of samples collected at multiple locations in the Syrian Arab Republic; and

(c) other chemical weapons-related activities that occurred prior to the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention").

9. The Syrian delegation, which included one new expert currently serving in the leadership of the SSRC, supplied a few documents during the course of the consultations. Regarding the SSRC, the Syrian Arab Republic supplemented its initial declaration through Note Verbale No. 93, dated 30 September 2017, by declaring additional laboratories and their rooms of the SSRC under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III and under Article VI of the Convention, and through Note Verbale No. 94, dated 2 October 2017, incorporating a brief overview of the general activities of the SSRC (including Institute 3000) since its establishment and a description of the laboratories recently declared under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III.

10. Nonetheless, neither the information provided during the consultations nor the latest submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic, dated 30 September and 2 October 2017, have enabled the resolution of all identified gaps, inconsistencies, and

discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. The continued lack of original historical records, coupled with the ongoing lack of access to and engagement with senior leaders/officials who have an overarching knowledge of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, precludes the Secretariat from verifying the underpinning explanations given by the Syrian Arab Republic regarding most of the outstanding issues. Regarding the SSRC, the Secretariat maintains its earlier assessment that the declaration of the SSRC remains incomplete.

11. The Director-General reported on these consultations in an unclassified Note entitled "Outcome of Further Consultations with the Syrian Arab Republic Regarding its Chemical Weapons Declaration" (EC-86/DG.30, dated 4 October 2017) and a Note entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-86/HP/DG.2, dated 3 October 2017 and Corr.1, dated 5 October 2017). Both Notes were noted by the Council at its Eighty-Sixth Session. Furthermore, a presentation by the head of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) was provided to States Parties on 3 October 2017.

12. In accordance with paragraph 8 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, in his opening statement at the Eighty-Sixth Session of the Council (EC-86/DG.32), the Director-General reiterated his call for States Parties to share any information they may have with respect to past or future allegations of use of chemical weapons within the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

13. As stated by the Director-General in the same statement, the Secretariat has also continued planning for the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC in the Syrian Arab Republic, pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

14. The Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the Syrian Arab Republic, met in Beirut, Lebanon, from 16 to 18 October 2017, to discuss the extension of the support provided by UNOPS and the Syrian Government, pursuant to existing arrangements, to the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2018.

15. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

16. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, the total contribution stood at EUR 11.5 million, with forthcoming additional donations. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

17. The Director-General briefed the States Parties on 3 October 2017 on the results of the analyses of samples relating to the alleged use of chemicals as weapons in Ltamenah, Hama Governorate, in the Syrian Arab Republic in March 2017. These results, which showed the presence of sarin and sarin-related

substances, were circulated to States Parties in a Note by the Secretariat (S/1544/2017, dated 12 October 2017).

18. The FFM will continue its work on this incident, as well as on other allegations that have been assessed as credible, guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015).

19. Further to the submission of the "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding an Alleged Incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic, April 2017" (S/1510/2017, dated 29 June 2017), the Secretariat issued on 17 October 2017 a Note entitled "Further Clarifications Why the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission Did Not Deploy to Khan Shaykhun" (S/1545/2017, dated 17 October 2017).

20. The OPCW has also continued to extend its full cooperation and support to the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Conclusion

21. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the initial inspections at the two stationary above-ground facilities and the verification of their destruction, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.